

The Christian and Amusements

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TEXT—And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.—Col. 3:17.



I. The true Christian will realize the true relation that should exist between work and pleasure.

If life is not to be one round of work, it must certainly be not to be all one round of pleasure. Work, not amusement, is the chief end of man. Let us not miss this point—work, not amusement, is the business of life.

God has laid upon every man the necessity of work, and for this reason has distributed "to every man his work." Is it not just in this connection that we may be justified in finding fault with the professional sport, the man who gives up his whole life to pleasure? When the main thing in college and university life is athletics we are not justified in protesting that life's main purpose is being lost sight of? Play and amusement is but a side issue in life; when it becomes the whole thing, then it is harmful and sinful, no matter whether the amusement in question be in the forbidden category or not; then even innocent amusement becomes morally bad. Amusement is to work what whetting the scythe is to harvesting; he who never stops to create an edge to his scythe but little while he who whets the scythe all day cuts none. If the mother enjoys amusements more than she does her children, the wife more than her domestic duties, the husband more than his home, the man more than his labor, and the student more than his books, then amusements are harmful and wrong.

2. The true Christian will see to it that his amusements are really recreative, and not dissipative.

A man may lie so long in a bath that he comes out of it all exhausted, or he can take a plunge or shower and come out all the better prepared for the duties of life. So is it with amusements; it may be just the opposite. The amusements of the Christian should build up lost tissue, rest the tired body and rejuvenate the faded mind; they must build up the whole man—physically, mentally, morally and spiritually.

1. The Christian's pleasures will recreate physically. The body of the Christian is the temple of the holy ghost. It is incumbent upon him therefore that he keep his body in as good, clean, pure, and healthy a condition as possible. The body needs relaxation; it needs rest from the strain and tension of life; it needs new blood, new nerve tissues; it needs by means of recreation, to be better fitted for the real tasks that lie within its sphere of labor.

The test the Christian must apply to his pleasures is this: do they recreate and restore the waste tissues of the body? Excess in athletics is not recreation. Young men have died from over-exhaustion in running; girls have been ruined for life by excessive rope jumping. Many pleasures dissipate the powers of the body instead of recreating them. Apply such a test to certain forms of popular amusements prevalent today: the theater, the dance, the card party. Do they recreate, or do they dissipate? Do they violate the laws of physical health by their late hours, their impure atmosphere, their mode of dress and conduct, or are they perfectly consistent with the observance of the laws of good health and hygiene? If these amusements violate the laws of health, then, until such times as they can be brought within the realm of recreative pleasures, the Christian must place them on the forbidden list.

2. The pleasures of the Christian should recreate mentally. The physical must not be developed at the expense of the mental. Gloom must be no means supplant intellectualism. Mind is greater than body, as Gladstone and Bismarck are greater than John L. Sullivan or James J. Jeffries. The Christian must ask himself, therefore, "What effect do my pleasures and amusements have upon my mind, my thought, my thinking? Do they build up, ennoble, purify, sanctify; or do they debase, befoul, besmirch, debase? Is my thinking higher, nobler, more God-like because of the pleasures in which I engage?"

All things are not to be judged by the eye; the mind discerns also. Shakespeare speaks of the man "who hath a body filled with a vacant mind, gets him to rest crammed with distressful bread." The Christian is to judge his amusements by this standard. Apply this principle to literature. What books do we read? If the Christian's master should inquire: "What readest thou?" what would be our reply? Beware lest our minds become diseased by the reading of light and trashy literature.

BARTON'S EXPERIMENT

By FRANK FILSON.

(Copyright, 1914, by W. G. Chapman.) John Barton had fallen in love with Lucy Dean after the first germs of his deadly purpose had sowed themselves in his mind. Once there, they had taken root and flourished, so that not even the new interest in his life could prevent their development.

The idea possessed him, body and soul. Since boyhood the temptation had come to him at idle moments when he was vaguely dissatisfied with life. But he had always fought it down and conquered with sheer will power.

He knew, however, that the law could never touch him. He knew that he could carry out this design with impunity, holding the harrowing knowledge of it in his own soul until the day of discovery.

Love comes unexpectedly enough, and Barton's soul was torn in twain after Lucy had promised to be his wife. Yet, fight as he might, he could not withstand the prompting of that impulse within. He had given rein to it too long.

He had a month's vacation every summer. That would be ample time in which to set his purpose, though his plan would not come to full fruition for two or three months longer. However, it was only necessary to start, and, automatically, the train that he had fired would smolder until, without intervention upon his part, the ripe fruits of his enterprise became manifest.

Barton had rented a little furnished cottage in a remote region of the Adirondacks, where his only neighbors were a few woodmen.

He made some miserable excuse to Lucy to cover his absence for so long a period, and disappeared from the haunts of his friends. And, the evening after his departure from the Grand Central station found him in the little cottage, alone, staring out moodily across the lake.

The clay-colored chemical which was so essential a feature of his design stood on the little bare table in the room which he had selected for his operations.

He had the formula calculated to a nicety. All that was necessary was time for the chemical combinations to become permanent and to produce their rich crop of results. The experiment had been performed many times since man emerged from barbarism, but less and less often as he became enlightened, and of recent years so seldom that its very infrequency was John Barton's greatest asset of safety.

It was on the fifth morning after his arrival that he received a letter from Lucy.

"My dearest John," she wrote, "I am becoming very uneasy about your going up to that out-of-the-way place in the Adirondacks, where you are all by yourself. Mother wants you to come back at once and spend the rest of the month with us at Atlantic Beach."

"I am greatly concerned about you, dear, and unless you write me that you are coming on the next train, I shall begin to think you do not love me."

The sight of Lucy's delicate handwriting brought back to him with a rush all the memory of their love. How fond they had been of each other! How the knowledge that she loved him had temporarily driven the thought of his purpose out of his mind. And how miserably he had striven to avoid that insistent temptation that came knocking at his heart!

But the experiment was under way, and, more, it was succeeding. There was no doubt of that. Science was infallible, and her laws absolute. And he had used only a tenth part of the clay-colored chemical, with its faint, aromatic smell, so subtle an agent in his great task, and yet apparently so innocuous.

John answered Lucy's letter, excusing himself on the ground that he needed perfect rest, and remained in his cottage.

Then the day of decision dawned. There was a letter from Lucy. John could hardly steady his fingers to tear it open.

"My dear John," it began, "since receiving your last letter I have felt very much hurt at your refusal to spend your holiday with us. I hoped that you would write again, and I have waited every day to hear from you. I was too proud to answer you."

"But now, dear John, I have come to the conclusion that you could not have treated me thus unless something serious were the matter. And so mother and I are coming up to Cranberry Lake to see you. We shall start tomorrow, and the day after you receive this, we shall be at your station. I hope you will meet us there, John, and remove my suspense—and mother's."

And now the die was cast, and the man's struggle between love and the dreadful task to which he had set himself was renewed more acutely than ever. None can know what a mental struggle he endured during the rest of that day. For, if he destroyed the results of his experiment he knew that he could not nerve himself to begin anew.

But the thought of Lucy conquered. As the gray dawn came stealing into his room, after a sleepless night, John emptied the clay-colored fluid out of the window. Then, taking a razor from the bottom of his bag, desperately, wildly, he shaved off his moustache.

A LETTER ALLEGED TO BE OF ANCIENT DATE

Newspapers throughout the United States are printing what is alleged to be a letter written by Christ.

In this letter was an injunction that it should be published to the world by whoever found it together with the statement that misfortune and bad luck would follow the person having possession of it in the event that it was not given publicly.

There was likewise a promise that whoever may have a copy of this in his or her possession will prosper and be followed by good fortune. According to the history of the letter it was written by Christ just after His crucifixion, signed by the Angel Gabriel ninety-nine years after the Savior's birth and presumable deposited by him under a stone at the foot of the cross.

On this stone appeared the following: "Blessed is he who shall turn me over."

No one knew what the inscription meant, or seemed to have sufficient curiosity to investigate, until the stone was turned over by a little child and the letter which follows was discovered:

"Whoever works on the Sabbath day shall be cursed. I command you to go to church and keep holy the Lord's day, without any manner of work. You shall not idle or mispend your time in bedecking yourself in superfluities of costly apparel and vain dressing, for I have ordered it a day of rest. I will have that day kept holy that your sins may be forgiven you."

"You will not break any commandments but observe and keep them, they being written by my hand and spoken from my mouth. You shall not only go to church yourself, but also your man servant and maid servant. Observe my words and learn my commandments. You shall finish your work every Saturday at six o'clock in the afternoon, at which hour the preparation for the Sabbath begins. I advise you to fast five days in the year, beginning on Good Friday and continuing the five days following in remembrance of the five bloody wounds I received for you and mankind. You shall love one another and cause them that are not baptized to come to church and receive the Holy Sacrament, that is to say baptism, and then the supper of the Lord, and be made a member thereof, and in so doing I will give you long life and many blessings. Your land shall be replenished and bring forth in abundance, and I will comfort you in the greatest temptations, and surely he that doeth to the contrary shall be cursed."

"I will also send hardness of the heart on them and especially on hardened and impenitent unbelievers. He that hath given to the poor shall find it profitable. Remember to keep the Sabbath day for the seventh day I have taken as a resting day unto my self."

"And he that hath a copy of this letter written by my own hands and spoken by my own mouth and keepeth it without publishing it, to others shall not prosper, but he that publisheth it to others shall be blessed by me and if their sins be as many as stars by night and if they truly believe they shall be pardoned, and they that believe not this writing and my commandments will have my plagues upon you and you will be consumed with your children, goods and cattle and all other worldly enjoyments that I have given. Do but once think of what I have suffered for you in this world and in the world to come."

"Whoever shall have a copy of this letter and keep it in their house nothing shall hurt them, neither pestilence, thunder nor lightning, and if any woman be in birth and put her trust in me she shall be delivered of her child. You shall hear no more news of me except through the Holy Scripture until the day of judgment. All goodness and prosperity shall be in the house where a copy of this letter shall be found. Finished."

The story goes that the little child who found it passed it to one who became a convert to the Christian faith. He failed to have the letter published. He kept it, however, as a sacred Memento of Christ and it passed down to different generations of his family for more than a thousand years.

During the period the family suffered repeated misfortunes, moved to different countries until finally one of them came to America, bringing the letter with him. They settled in Virginia, then moved further south, still followed by misfortune, when finally, the last member, a daughter, approached her deathbed and called a neighbor, a Mrs. Thompson, giving her the letter and relating its history for more than one thousand years.

The Thompson woman began the attempt to have it published, and it first appeared in the Rome, Ga., Tribune, on October 21, 1891. It then appeared in the Dalton, Ga., Citizen, and Mrs. Wartman, now living in Marion, Ind., clipped it and kept it in her possession for many years without an effort to have it published. She was followed by misfortune which she attributed to her neglect in trying to have the letter published. Mrs. Ruby Crutchfield of Trezavant, Tenn., is also said to have had a copy and failed to have it published for three years, and was followed by a varied lot of misfortune, which she attributed to the fact of her neglect in this respect.

Palm Beach Suits dry-cleaned and pressed.—J. F. Puttmann, Merchant Tailor, Farmington, Mo.

BUY A HOME

Fine Land, in Tracts of 40 Acres or More

The top soil is a black sandy loam. The underlying soil is lighter, mixed with sand and a kind of silt, composed of vegetable matter. The soil is good, produces corn abundantly, all the grasses, and will grow alfalfa well. The growing of alfalfa has been demonstrated on land of the same character, and in the same vicinity for a number of years. It will grow four or five crops of alfalfa, that is from a ton to two tons per acre, which will net the owner not less than \$10.00 per ton and possibly \$15.00 per ton, and is always salable. Any purchaser may buy 40 acres or more of this land by applying to Merrill Pipkin, and agreeing to pay \$30.00 per acre. At the time of the purchase 10 per cent must be paid, and the remainder of the purchase money must be paid within ten years. The division of the balance of the purchase price being equally for each year, until the ten years expire. Interest 5 per cent on notes given for the balance of the purchase money, secured by first mortgage on the land. There is a drainage tax of \$10.00 per acre, payable in 20 years, which will be 50c per acre annually. The school, county and state taxes are reasonable.

The Frisco railroad runs within a half mile of the East line of the section, and the station most available is Tallapoosa. Good water, clear as crystal, can be gotten by driving a pump from fifteen to twenty-five feet, which can be done in a half day. The building places are good and a house such as would be wanted by a settler should not cost more than from \$400.00 to \$600.00. Lumber and other building materials are near and cheap.

There are no mosquitos, and health is as good as anywhere else. It is but a few miles to Parma, a good town, where health is as good as in the hills. Taking it all in all this is a most excellent opportunity for men of limited means to get a home; and the land when open to cultivation will be worth not less than \$75.00 per acre. It will produce \$50.00 bushels of corn to the acre, oats, timothy, wheat, cow peas, etc., and alfalfa as already described.

The timber on the land with careful handling will pay the greater part of the cost of clearing, and consists of gum, ash, sycamore, elm, and other swamp growths.

This section lies between two dredge ditches, running parallel with the West and the East lines of the section. These ditches are to be dredged this coming summer, which will give the section excellent drainage, which will fit it well for alfalfa.

There will be also steel bridges built across these dredge ditches every two miles. Public roads have been laid out and platted for opening, which will pass over such bridges. The dirt thrown from these ditches at a depth of not less than eight feet and to twelve feet show the character of the soil.

Write or see

MERRIL PIPKIN,
FARMINGTON, MO.

WAITING ON THE CORNER

By JOHN PHILIP ORTH.

(Copyright, 1914, by the McClure Newspaper Syndicate.)

Miss Madge Seaforth was playing the piano in the parlor of her father's house when all at once there came a jangle. If one is playing "The Old Folks at Home" and absently wanders off into the air of "Yankee Doodle," there's going to be a jangle. And then you suddenly remember that you borrowed Bessie Walter's dream-book a day or two ago, and solemnly promised her that if the reading of it caused you to dream you would faithfully relate that dream to the lender of the book without unnecessary delay.

Well, Miss Madge had read the book from cover to cover. Much of its contents had made her gasp and shiver. She had dreamed of being chased by snakes, wolves, brigands and runaway locomotives.

They had run her through swamps, thickets and meadows; they had run her up hill and down; they ran her through streets and alleys.

At last, after the chase had continued for miles and the poor girl had just jumped a fence nine feet high without her French heels touching a splinter, she caught the lower limb of a tree and clambered up to safety. She went to the telephone to relate the dream in full. Miss Madge settled herself for a cozy chat when the answer came back from the central office:

"Can't do it; the lines are crossed."

"What's the matter with the line?"

"It's never in order!"

"And I wanted to talk to Wall street!"

"You man with the big bull voice, shut up!"

Miss Madge found herself interested. There was one firm, clear voice that dominated the rest, though it was lost in the shuffle now and then. The girl caught these words:

"At least ten thousand. About two o'clock. The corner of Willow and Stark streets. Don't strike to kill, but to stun. Yes, two of them. Then upstairs and down the back way. Sure thing."

What was the meaning of those words? Here was something different from a dream. It was a mystery. "I am going to be there and see it," she mused.

At 1:45 that afternoon an auto with Miss Madge Seaforth seated in the tonneau was at the corner of Willow and Stark streets. Three men were leaning against a wall.

From down Stark street came two men. One of the men carried a leather bag.

A moment more and things began to happen. The three loungers attacked the two men with the bag. There were shouts and blows and scuffling. The chauffeur leaped to the walk and ran away. Miss Madge opened the door of the vehicle and stood screaming. She hardly realized it when one of the men threw the bag at her feet.

"Save it from the thugs if you can!"

And then the girl found herself at the wheel and speeding away. Straight home, a mile away, and the bag was carried into the house. It was then that Miss Madge had a fit of hysteria.

The evening papers had a sensation, and as Miss Madge read the scare-heads she was as white as a sheet.

"The boldest holdup for years!"

"Planned by a handsome girl!"

"She waits in an auto and drives off with the \$8,000 that was to pay the hands in a factory!"

"The robbers arrested, but they won't talk!"

"Their victims seriously injured in their plucky fight!"

"Who is the handsome queen of the robber gang?"

No police and no reporters until Mr. Seaforth arrived home and telephoned them. A few explanations and all was made clear.

Nine detectives and 21 reporters called at the Seaforth residence for interviews. The factory men called. Strangers in the city called and said it was a bully thing to do. Seventeen photographers wanted sittings, and felt ill-used when they did not secure them.

Among the last callers was Stephen Adair, one of the robbers' victims. He it was who threw the bag into the auto and shouted to the girl to drive off, and he had been made a hero of. He still wore a plaster or two over his hurts, but it is always proper for a hero to want to call on a heroine.

And there was opportunity for admiration to grow into love, and it grew.

Water Cooled Without Ice.

In semi-arid regions natives supply themselves with cool water through the use of porous earthen urns which are placed where they can be exposed to the action of the breezes; at the same time the urns are protected from the sun's rays, being placed in a locality where there is shade. The moisture in the urn penetrating through the jar to the surface accumulates on the outside and is evaporated rapidly by the action of the hot winds, and the water within cooled. The same principle may be utilized by having concrete tanks or receptacles for water where ice cannot conveniently be procured. Ordinary concrete is porous and because of this serves in the same capacity as if it were earthenware. Such a container is well suited for use in harvest fields and on golf courses.

What Is Sin?

By REV. PARLEY E. ZARTMANN, D. D.
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TEXT—The crown is fallen from our head, woe unto us that we have sinned.—Lam. 5:16.



Sin is not a popular word in the modern vocabulary, nor a popular theme in many pulpits, for there are so many sinners in the modern congregation who object to the preacher dealing with things so near home. But let us consider four of the definitions which the Bible gives of sin; in the light of these may we see ourselves and seek him who knows the way out—"A God on a cross, that is all my theology."

Unrighteousness.

1. All unrighteousness is sin, 1 John 5:7. This is the most comprehensive term, and in the Bible is placed in opposition to "truth." (Rom. 2:8.) God is true, and anything which departs one hair's breadth from that standard is unrighteousness, or sin. Therefore, in this definition we have to do with sin as a state of the soul, the original purpose of which was to be a visible reflection of the mind of God. Man was to glorify God in his body, soul and spirit, but, alas, what a failure there has been; and this failure is sin. Man has failed to hit the aim or object of his being. His body is sinful, his mind is diseased, his soul is warped by sin. "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God." Even our "righteousness is as filthy rags." In this sense sin is "any lack of conformity to the will of God."

Transgression.

2. Sin is the transgression of the law. (1 John 3:4.) From the state of the soul we pass to the overt act. In the days of the dispensation of conscience and before the giving of the law, sin was against the character of God. It was unrighteousness, or ungodliness, and not, strictly speaking, transgression; and yet, there was sin, because death came, which is the wages of sin, the result of Adam's sin, disobedience to a positive command. But when the law has come, when the commandment has been given, then sin passes from the unrighteousness to positive transgression. God has put down a line, and by deliberate choice man steps over the line—transgresses—and becomes a sinner by commission—or "violation of the will of God."

You say you do not sin, you are doing the best you can. Yes, but you have a very low idea of sin. Bring your crooked life, which seems so good to you, side by side with the straight line of God's sinless life and his holy law, and you must cry out, "God be merciful to me the sinner." You may look good to yourself, you may appear good to your neighbors, but in God's sight you belong to the wicked. Think of your many sins against God—lack of perfect love, some idol in your heart, neglect of his Sabbath, hateful or angry feelings, lack of forgiveness or apology, misrepresentation, falsehood, deceit, slander, repeated refusal to obey some clear command of God—say, do you not need to cry out, "Unclean, unclean?"

Omission.

3. To him that knoweth to do good and doeth it not, it is sin. (James 4:17.) Many a man defends himself because he is not an outbreaking sinner, he does not commit any flagrant crime, he is outwardly decent and moral. But what about God's estimate of you? "Man looketh on the outward appearance, but God looketh on the heart." Does that man have the love of God in his heart? Does he love the Word and prayer? Does he serve his fellows unselfishly? If not, and he knows all these things, he is a sinner. Refuse to use medicine when you are sick, and you will die, and that without the use of the knife or poison. When we sit alone with our consciences we find sins of omission to be a large item in the account against us.

Unfaith.

4. Whosoever is not of faith is sin. (Rom. 14:23.) Here we enter the domain of questions of conscience, the things which may be right for others, but which would be sin in us; for there is a difference between things wrong in themselves and things wrong under certain circumstances. This question of conscience was raised in Paul's day about the eating of meat which had been offered to idols and afterwards offered for sale in the markets of the city. Paul says that every man is to give an account of himself unto God, and sets forth the principle that if anything seems to you to be sinful and wrong, then for you to do such a thing is sin in you. In this category must be placed questionable amusements, etc., and Paul says: "Let not your good be evil spoken of." Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth. And he that doubteth is condemned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith; for whatsoever is not of faith is sin."